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ABSTRACT

This guide is designed to provide Future Farmers of America (FFA) advisors with information to assist them in their efforts to include all youth in FFA, including those with disabilities. It addresses benefits of involving youth with disabilities and federal, state, and local legislation and regulations concerning people with disabilities. Practical suggestions are offered for changing attitudes toward students with disabilities. A section on supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs for members with disabilities lists components of a well-designed SAE program, provides an SAE project selection checklist, and discusses task analysis of projects. Case examples are provided of youth with disabilities who have been active and successful in FFA. The next section offers practical ways to improve accessibility in the following areas: program; classroom; laboratory (shops, greenhouses, outdoor learning areas); FFA camp and fair building; and student farmstead. A brief overview of the most common types of disabilities describes general characteristics of different types of impairments and gives suggestions for how to work with youth in each respective disability area. Other contents include the following: information on scholarship opportunities for disabled students; definitions; a list of general resource people; and a list of names, addresses, and descriptions of support services and agencies. Contains 18 references. (YLB)

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An Advisor's Guide to FFA Involvement for Members with Disabilities

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The FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.

The Agricultural Education Mission

The mission of Agricultural Education is to prepare and support individuals for careers, build awareness, and develop leadership for the food, fiber, and natural resource systems.

BRIDGING HORIZONS

An Advisor's Guide to FFA Involvement for Members with Disabilities

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PREFACE

Dear FFA Advisor:

Jeff was paralyzed in an auto accident following his freshman year in high school. He began to look immediately for ways to return his life to as normal as possible. The community got involved by donating time, money, and support to the family. Jeff's fellow FFA members pitched in to help his family add a downstairs bedroom and bath and an accessible garage to their home so Jeff, now using a wheelchair, could return home from the hospital. After returning home, Jeff began to work on his farm projects and explored ways to adapt his supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs to accommodate his disability. A four wheel all-terrain vehicle was purchased and modified with hand controls for Jeff to check pastures and feed gestating sows. Additional projects included making his farrowing house wheelchair accessible and building and installing a lift and hand controls on one of the tractors, so he could operate it.

In the classroom, Jeff focused on computer applications and agricultural marketing with the use of a data terminal subscription service. This provided him experience, skills, and knowledge in business management. The information also provided Jeff a more detailed analysis of his own farm operation.

As an FFA member, Jeff was involved in committee work, livestock shows, and judging contests. He was a local, district, and state proficiency winner in swine production and received his State and American FFA degrees. Jeff also received a Triangle Grant Award and

BRIDGE Scholarship. Jeff is still involved in various ways. He now attends Kansas State University and has served as class president. Being able to continue in production agriculture has proven one of the most positive results of his membership in FFA.

Every FFA member has a lot to contribute to the chapter activities. As agriculture has changed, the organization has also changed and we now realize that every individual has the potential to benefit from the opportunities available in FFA. Helping an FFA member with a disability can be a rewarding experience for all members and advisors. I hope that this publication will help you create your own success stories similar to my experience with Jeff.

Sincerely,

Cary Granzow
Centre FFA Advisor
Herrington, KS

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

"I have met a few students in FFA with disabilities. They've been just as involved as me. They seemed no different, they're just the same. I used to be in a special ed class. I give everyone encouragement. I give them as much encouragement as I do everyone else. Being in FFA builds their self-esteem."

Gene Pietro, FFA chapter president, Penns Grove High School, Penns Grove, New Jersey

The purpose of this guide is to provide FFA advisors with information to assist them in their efforts to include all youth in FFA, including those who have a disability. According to a recent report from the United States Census Bureau, nearly 4.9 million or 10 percent of all school-age youth have a disability. In the past, students with disabilities have often avoided agricultural education classes because of inaccessible facilities and program activities. Or, they may have been advised not to participate in programs by those who believe agriculture is "just farming," and not a viable option for individuals with disabilities. However, with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, new attention has been focused on ensuring that all publicly funded programs, services and materials are accessible to persons with disabilities.

This guide contains sound reasons why youth with disabilities should be involved in FFA and suggestions for program modifications and for improving accessibility. In addition, case examples of youth with disabilities who have been active and successful in FFA are included. This guide also describes general characteristics of different types of impairments and gives suggestions for how to work with youth of each respective disability area. Finally, it provides a Resource Section to help you obtain additional information from professional organizations concerning youth with disabilities.

We hope this guide will increase the sensitivity of all FFA advisors and members to the unique needs of persons with disabilities and the important contributions they can make when provided the opportunity. Our goal is to help more young people with disabilities participating in FFA.

Benefits of Involving Youth with Disabilities

Encouraging youth with disabilities to be involved in FFA is part of fulfilling the spirit and goals of FFA: to nurture and encourage students "by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education" (FFA Mission Statement, 1995 Official FFA Manual).

The effort required to incorporate young people with disabilities can provide an enriching experience for all FFA members and for you, the advisor, as well. Through the skills you teach and the care you demonstrate, you can cultivate independence and confidence in members with disabilities to enable them to go places they never thought possible.

Furthermore, all FFA members can benefit from the opportunity to interact regularly with youth they perceive to be different, and learn they really are not so different. Members discover that all people have unique strengths and abilities as well as weaknesses. All members grow socially by developing positive attitudes and removing prejudices and enjoy the benefits of new friendships and shared experiences.

Consider ways to break down barriers that limit students with disabilities from fully experiencing what your local programs offer them. By doing so, you will contribute positively to the self-esteem and self-reliance of individuals with disabilities who desire to be part of an agricultural education program.

It has been suggested that 90 percent of the success in including individuals with disabilities lies in having the right attitude. Young people with disabilities can often surpass our expectations if we approach the situation positively and creatively. Instilling an attitude of "I can do it" will make a world of difference for the individual with a disability. This individual can, in turn, instill in everyone around him or her the same positive attitude.

Legislation Concerning People with Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was among the first civil rights laws that protected individuals with disabilities against discrimination on the basis of their disability in federally funded programs. Two years later Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975 to guarantee children with a disability a free and appropriate education. EHA also established the Individual Education Plan (IEP), which emphasized a more collaborative effort among parents, children with a disability, school administrators, and employers in developing the child's education plan.

The Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 provided more federal funds to assist special needs students in gaining access to vocational education. By 1990, the EHA was amended and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). One provision of this Act was that schools are now required to provide assistive devices to students with disabilities as part of a free and appropriate education.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), also passed in 1990, is the most sweeping law concerning individuals with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public services, public accommodations, communications, transportation, and state and local governments. This law has implications for FFA programs, since they receive some in-kind or direct financial support from state and local governmental agencies. Therefore, all facilities, services, and communications associated with FFA must, to the fullest extent possible, be made accessible, according to specific guidelines.

Some communities and states also have established special regulations for individuals with disabilities. This includes parking privileges, public meeting accommodations, and transportation services. It may be valuable to review with school administrators and local legal counsel how legislation concerning students with disabilities directly affects FFA programs and activities in your location. Being proactive and informed can be an effective means in minimizing problems and ensuring full participation by everyone.

FFA's Response

Recent legislation affords an opportunity for FFA advisors to provide equal access to services and programs for all people, regardless of their disability. By using this Guide, your FFA chapter can meet both the spirit and the requirements of this legislation to make FFA programs, classrooms and activities accessible to all persons.

"We have one young man this summer with a learning disability. I said to his mom, "You have to let me have him!" He has really learned a lot. He was in a shell. But now it's different. He asks when he has a question.

I say to the other teachers, 'Send them to me, I'll work with them!' I teach attitude first, and agriculture second. In two years, their attitude can really change."

Ernesto Zamudio, Agricultural Education Teacher, Chinle High School, Navajo reservation, Chinle, Arizona.

CHANGING YOUR OUTLOOK

The giant share of what it takes to make most programs accessible to students with disabilities is simply a change in attitude. Too often a teacher is uncomfortable with a student's disabilities and subconsciously passes this response on to other students.

A few practical suggestions:

- Become aware of students in your school with different types of disabilities who may desire to become involved in your agriculture program. Realize that persons with disabilities fall into many more categories than just wheelchair users. A later section, "Understanding Disabilities," gives details on various types of impairments.
- Keep in mind that frequent interaction between teacher and student leads to a positive academic response.
- Get rid of any expectations that a student with a disability should simply sit quietly without causing any disruptions. Expect the same behavior from students with disabilities as you do from non-disabled students. Avoid relating a specific behavior to a student's disability.
- Vary the learning environment: implement a variety of teaching techniques and strategies in and out of the classroom.
- Encourage all students to discover what his or her strengths are, rather than focusing on areas of disability. Strengths may be physical or mental abilities, specific skills or talents or interpersonal abilities. If a student has trouble identifying strengths, he or she may want to ask a friend, family member or teacher what they think his/her personal assets are.
- Confront abusive behavior towards students with disabilities in a positive constructive manner. Encourage and acknowledge student behavior that demonstrates respect for others.

"I have had some autistic students and some with attention deficit disorder. They have participated in contests and public speaking events. At the award banquet everyone has an opportunity to speak; everyone gets to introduce someone or to give an award or something. It's just amazing to see the confidence they develop through getting a chance to speak in front of a group."

MeeGee Baker, Agricultural Education Teacher, Greenwood High School, Perry County, Pennsylvania

Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs for Members with Disabilities

The Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program provides a realistic and valuable option for FFA members with disabilities. Special equipment or modifications can often enable them to participate in most activities. Assist students with disabilities in selecting worthwhile SAE programs and conduct regular SAE visits at their home or work site.

A well-designed SAE program should include:

- Competencies and skills to be learned;
- Task analysis;
- Notation of existing barriers (if any) to completion of the required tasks;
- Responsibility and ownership for the student.

No project should be off limits for students with disabilities. Specific case histories of SAE programs and FFA activities of members with disabilities are provided in this publication. We encourage you to read these case histories and take note of the possibilities that may exist in your program for FFA members with disabilities.

SAE Project Selection Checklist

An SAE project should be chosen by the individual with the help of the advisor and approval of the parents. Consider the following questions in determining whether a particular SAE project is appropriate for an FFA member with a disability:

- Does the project interest the FFA member?
- What are the individual's abilities?
- What interests, knowledge, and experience does the member have in the subject area?

- In what ways is the student able to compensate for limitations?
- Are there hazards involved that need to be addressed or that cause unique problems due to the nature of the disability? For example, welding may present an added risk to a student with a spinal cord injury, because of his or her lack of skin sensitivity. A visually impaired student may be at risk using certain types of tools.

- Are safe tool and equipment adaptations available and free of hazards? Do the planned activities present any hazards to others who might be involved?
- Are materials and devices you are considering using to make adaptations economical, readily available, durable and, if possible, aesthetically pleasing (are they comfortable and acceptable to the student)?
- Can the project be designed to be self-directed so the individual can move at his or her own pace?
- Does the SAE project prepare the member for employment through knowledge, skills or attitude development?

Task Analysis of Projects

When working with FFA members with disabilities, the instructions and prepared activities may need to be presented to them step-by-step. This process of breaking down the activities into individual tasks or steps is referred to as task analysis. Providing members with a step-by-step method of completing tasks helps them work at their own pace one step at a time until the skill is achieved. They can then proceed to the next skill and work at it step-by-step until it is also achieved. Learning one skill at a time allows students to see their progress, motivating them to complete the SAE project.

Providing students with a checklist of skills to be mastered as part of the project is helpful so they can mark off each skill as it is achieved. The progress made is then readily visible to the students throughout the project. Lists of skills for many typical SAE projects are available. Check with your state FFA advisor or Agricultural Education consultant for assistance.

"We have special needs students included in regular classes. We need to not just push them through school and give them a diploma. FFA can help give them success, prepare them for employment, and give them job skills.

We had a blind girl who judged livestock. We developed a buddy system to help out. The other students helped her feel the animals. We are learning to accept her for who she is."

Debbie Seibert,
FFA member, Manheim
Central High School,
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Successful Case Histories of Youth with Disabilities Involved in FFA Programs

It may be difficult to imagine a student with a disability, especially a severe disability, successfully participating in traditional SAE activities. Be assured, though, that it has been done and continues to be done every day in numerous agricultural education programs across the country. The following case histories offer just a few of the many success stories reviewed in preparing this publication. They are provided as a means of encouragement and to clearly demonstrate that when given the opportunity, instructors and students can achieve their goals.

Oklahoma

The Agricultural Education Department at Altus High School in Altus, Oklahoma, has worked diligently for the past five years to meet the needs of its physically and mentally disabled students. The efforts have been quite varied but always begin with the high school principal, the special education instructor, school counselor, and the entire teaching staff of the Agricultural Education Department. The needs of the student are considered and discussed with both the student and the parent. Then an individualized education program is developed for all students with disabilities.

> **"...experience as a teacher working with disabled students has brought many memorable moments. We all need to be aware of the tremendous opportunities for growth in the agricultural education program through this facet of instruction. Disabled students must be considered a vital portion of our continued grow..."**
>
> *Bruce Farquhar, Agricultural Education Teacher, Altus High School, Altus, Oklahoma*

Presently I have a young lady, Leah, who is blind and enrolled in her third year of agricultural education courses. She is a very intelligent girl, maintaining a GPA above 4.0. She takes notes in class on a laptop computer. The software, when taken home and loaded onto her voice-synthesized home computer, allows her to study classroom material. In addition, she raises purebred sheep and exhibits show lambs.

Leah enters the ring unassisted, shows her lambs, and exits the showring through the use of a private band radio that I use to instruct her. It has required many hours of practice to perfect her showmanship skills.

The audience, and more often than not the judge, never realize she is visually impaired. Leah's practice and dedication have allowed her to simulate eye contact, following the judge as he moves around the showring.

Leah is involved in competitive public speaking and parliamentary procedure and exhibits the same degree of expertise in competition in these areas as with the sheep. Modifications in the speech room require that a half-inch rope be placed around a "safe area" at the front of the room. She then feels the rope with her feet as she moves about the room delivering her speech. Again, eye contact with the judges is simulated once she has determined their position in the room.

Of special note was Leah's acceptance to the National FFA Band. Not only did she play, she marched in the Grand Entry without a single problem. Unfortunately, Leah's condition is degenerative; she is not the marvel woman she may appear to be. Her lack of physical stamina must be constantly monitored throughout all her agricultural education and FFA endeavors. This is not a major disadvantage; it simply goes with the territory.

All her curriculum in agricultural education must be recorded on audiotape and reproduced in Braille during the preceding summer months. Currently, she is training with a Seeing Eye dog. Most certainly he will soon be a permanent companion on FFA trips.

Another physically disabled student of exceptional ability was Jennifer, who was born with a rare disfiguring and crippling disease. Doctors gave her little chance of living out her first year. Throughout her life, Jennifer has undergone over 120 surgeries at various hospitals and clinics throughout the United States. Her perseverance allowed her to reign as the victor over insurmountable odds. She had one artificial leg from the hip down and a club foot on the other leg. Operations were

"FFA gave me the encouragement, confidence and support that I needed after my accident to have confidence in myself and to continue to search after the goals I had set for myself. I was state FFA president at the time. A lot of people were counting on me and I couldn't let them down. Life in the 13 years since then hasn't all been a bed of roses. You have to deal with the emotional and physical side of things, and I've gone through rough times as well as good times. But I would say that FFA really boosted my self-esteem."

Leroy Billman, Prospect, Ohio, Former Ohio FFA President (Leroy had his right arm amputated as a result of a farm accident which occurred just three weeks before the convention in 1982.)

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"There are a couple of students with special needs in our FFA chapter. They can all be in some kind of contest. There is always someone to tutor them. I was in peer tutoring myself. I helped a girl who was ineligible for FFA with her school work to get her grades up so she could participate. She and I both benefited."

Becky Grissom, FFA member, Greenwood High School, Perry County, Pennsylvania

frequently required on Jennifer's hands; some joints and even fingers had to be amputated. A simple bump on the arm or abdomen could cause internal bleeding, bruises, and hospitalization. Jennifer woke everyday with more pain than most of us will experience in a lifetime, yet her determination allowed her to succeed where others would never try.

As a 10-year-old, Jennifer wanted to show sheep. I worked closely with her and her first lamb was a Southdown, selected because of the breed's smaller size. She had to show with a halter and her lack of strength prevented her from bracing that first lamb, but her success in the ring encouraged her to continue. Next, Jennifer wanted to show larger Suffolk wethers because "they were more competitive." She practiced for hours with lambs, perfecting a method of bracing the lambs against the stump of her leg. She would become physically exhausted from the effort. More than once Jennifer left the livestock show and spent the next few days hospitalized due to her injuries from the lambs.

As she matured and entered high school, Jennifer enrolled in agricultural education classes and built a small ewe flock. She excelled in public speaking, parliamentary procedure and livestock judging, and served as an FFA chapter officer. The first time Jennifer left her parents' care to participate in FFA activities, she was accompanied by a nurse or my wife to assist her. Beyond the obvious needs, such as accessible motel rooms, plane flights instead of bus rides, seating on the arena floor instead of the balcony at the National FFA Convention, there were many more accommodations that had to be made. Jennifer's dietary requirements, frequent rest periods, and inability to walk extended distances or on rough and inclined surfaces had to be addressed.

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Despite the fact that her hands had limited strength and mobility, Jennifer was an outstanding artist. Her drawings and designs were utilized in all our FFA publications. Jennifer's artwork is displayed in the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and the Omniplex in Oklahoma City, as well as many other institutions throughout the United States.

Her presence was an inspiration to me and her fellow FFA members. This past spring, Jennifer delayed a surgery until after the county livestock show so she could compete once again. Upon her return home she inspected her new lamb crop and died unexpectedly later that evening.

Jennifer was a determined, successful FFA member and artist. On her first trip to our state livestock show she left me with a statement I apply to each and every student with a disability. We were waiting to enter the showring when she lost her footing in the sand and fell to the ground. Her dad quickly grabbed the lamb while I extended my hand to help her get up. Jennifer retracted her arm and sharply told me, "I don't need any help!" She dusted herself off, realigned her prosthesis, inspected the lamb once more, and entered the ring. Later that evening she apologized and explained, "I'm not handicapped in my mind. I don't need any more than any other student here. If you need to help the others that's fine, but I need to do this myself."

That's what every student deserves, the chance to do for himself or herself. What we often perceive as a handicap, such as being blind or having a mobility impairment, is only a minor setback to determined students such as Leah or Jennifer.

Source: Bruce Farquhar, Agricultural Education Teacher, Altus High School, Altus, Oklahoma

"Everyone has an equal opportunity to help out in the chapter. It gives them a sense of responsibility and helps them feel important. The ones who are mentally impaired are included in all our activities – they're invited to go on trips and contests. They assist in the work program in our school by helping clean up the school. It's a community service project through the school."

Clint Hile, FFA member, Greenwood High School, Perry County, Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania

There was one girl who was born with shortened upper extremities. Her arms were elbow length and she didn't have all five fingers. She was very isolated and didn't talk much to other kids. But she has really blossomed and has become involved in public speaking and other chapter activities. She has been involved in agricultural education all four years. I really encouraged her to get involved and the other students helped — they just pulled her in. She did floral design and greenhouse work. The other students were there for her; they were a constant encouragement to her.

There were other disabilities that were not so readily visible. Robert was a young man who had cancer and has since passed away. He wore his FFA jacket quite proudly. When he was going through chemotherapy he became bald, so he wore a hat. I told him that it was okay. He took his hat off and never wore it again when he was in school.

Source: Marcia Paterson, Director of Agricultural and Environmental Education, Milton Hershey High School, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Idaho

Arlen was born with multiple sclerosis. He has problems with motor skill coordination and has a speech impediment. Raised on a family-operated dairy, Arlen milks cows, cares for calves and young stock, moves hand sprinkler lines, stacks hay, and does other work necessary to keep the operation going.

While in FFA, Arlen owned six registered Holstein cows and many heifers, and sold his bulls for breeding stock. He knows how to judge, fit, and show stock, and has won the dairy fitting and showing contest at the fair.

Arlen was in the agricultural education classes. The classes helped him develop his confidence and skills.

We developed a strong relationship during that time based upon mutual respect and trust.

Arlen was a chapter and district officer and received his State FFA Degree. When he applied for his state degree, I wrote down Arlen's responses for the judge because of his speech impediment. An advisor's attitude is critical to success – if advisors will adjust their time and attitude, they can help youth with disabilities have success in FFA and in life. Arlen was totally committed to FFA and found success in it because an advisor said, "You can do it."

Source: Larry Stevens, Agricultural Education Instructor, Grace High School, Grace, Idaho

> **"An advisor's attitude is critical to success. If advisors will adjust their time and attitude, they can help youth who are challenged to have success in FFA and in life."**
>
> *Larry Stevens, Agricultural Education Instructor, Grace High School Grace, Idaho*

Indiana

Josh was a high school sophomore when his left leg was amputated because of osteosarcoma (cancer). He was then fitted with a prosthesis. He remained active in FFA, specializing in dairy judging and horticultural laboratory. Josh was well respected by his peers and teachers and encouraged other students with disabilities to get involved. Now in college, Josh has continued to work for a dairy farmer near his home during school breaks. His activities include baling hay, milking, grinding corn, spreading manure, chopping silage, and so on. He says, "I can do anything that a two-legged person can." In addition, Josh had been a wrestler since fourth grade. He has continued to compete and excel in wrestling. His goal is to become a teacher.

The horticulture lab work Josh did in FFA included trimming trees, although he admits he had some difficulty climbing up into the trees. He also did all types of greenhouse work: sterilizing and potting soil, watering, transplanting, and selling and distributing plants.

Source: Ed Paxton, Former Agricultural Education Instructor, Harrison High School, West Lafayette, Indiana

Kentucky

Troy had a tumor on his spine when he was very young. The radiation treatment he received for the tumor also damaged the spine so severely that he has no use of his legs and thus uses a wheelchair.

Troy was very active in his FFA chapter and became chapter president and later a state FFA officer. In shop, we made a welding table that the wheelchair would fit under and installed a shield to deflect the sparks away from his legs. We ensured that there was always a path through the shop for the wheelchair. While doing mechanical work on his sixwheeler, Troy used a creeper to sit on and pull himself around the project. Often another student would simply lift him from the wheelchair and put him in the middle of the work he was doing. Other students were very helpful on field trips and judging competitions. Troy's wheelchair was something the class learned to work around and was not a barrier to any activity. It did make for some humorous stories that we all will remember. Troy is now married and has a good job. The positive attitude of Troy and his parents was the main thing that contributed to his success.

Matt, another student, had cerebral palsy and did not have full use of his hands or legs. He could walk on crutches, but it was very tiring for him. He rode from class to class in a three-wheeled electric cart.

When welding, Matt would lean on the crutches and sometimes use a stool to help support himself. No major changes were made to accommodate Matt. He did not want us to do special things because of his disability. Matt was very independent and worked hard to be able to do the things other students did. He has finished his college degree, and I have no doubt that he will be very successful.

"FFA can give encouragement to students with disabilities. It gives them success in gaining jobs after high school.

I teach these students carpentry, welding, and small engines. In ninth grade I taught them how to read a ruler. The first thing one young man was asked when he got a job was if he could read a ruler. He could! He came back to let me know. We need to not just slide over the basics (like reading a ruler), but making sure they learn these things."

Woody Pugh Jr., Agricultural Education Teacher, Clark County High School, Alabama

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Both of these students have disabilities more serious than many people who just give up. I believe that their success stories are a result of the attitudes that their parents helped to develop. Neither of them viewed their disability as a limitation. To them it was just another challenge to be met to achieve their goal. Working with these young men was a very positive thing for both teachers and students. To watch them work and do things that most people would have thought impossible was an inspiration to people around them.

Source: Gary Long, Agricultural Education Instructor, Hancock County High School, Lewisport, Kentucky

Mississippi

I had the pleasure of teaching Justin in production agriculture and being his local FFA advisor. Justin was born with cerebral palsy. He uses a wheelchair and has very limited control of his hands and arms. He is very bright, is an excellent artist, and has a very positive attitude toward life.

Justin excelled in high school, especially in agriculture classes and FFA. No major curriculum or facility changes were needed for him. In FFA, Justin participated in leadership training, livestock judging, and extemporaneous public speaking, served as a chapter and state FFA officer, and participated in many other activities.

Justin's college career was equally successful. He majored in agricultural economics with an emphasis on international agricultural relations. He worked one summer in Washington, D.C., with the USDA in the Department of Agricultural Economic Research Services. During his junior year at college, Justin was honored to be selected for "Mortar Board" (outstanding scholars).

Source: D. Marcus Savell, Director, Newton County Vocational Center, Decatur, Mississippi

"Many times, a chance for success is all these students need to develop a positive attitude and become productive young people. Accomplishments in their programs as well as personal pride are worth the extra effort and time required to work with disabled students."

D. Marcus Savell, Director, Newton County Vocational Center, Decatur, Mississippi

"My biggest stumbling block to teaching a student who was deaf was getting over my own negative attitude. I realized that he was just as capable as any other student in the class and more interested than most. I have learned a lot from him, and I think I am a better teacher because of the experience."

Kenny Graham
Agricultural Education Instructor, Farmington FFA Chapter, Farmington, Missouri

Missouri

Andy* has had a profound hearing loss since birth. His parents do not sign. He has lived in a world with no sound and was not mainstreamed in school until his ninth grade year when he asked to take an agriculture class. My first visit to his home was a real eye-opening experience.

In class, the first obstacle I had to overcome was getting used to an interpreter in my classroom. She made me nervous at first, but she was simply providing information for Andy in a language he could understand. Andy learned and recited the FFA creed in sign language through her. It was a great learning opportunity for my class.

Andy has gone to the state FFA convention and spent a week at our State FFA Leadership Training Camp. He has been a member of the poultry judging team and the meats judging team.

Andy has been a real pleasure to be around. He especially likes the agricultural mechanics class. He has a great sense of humor, is very intelligent, and has a great deal of interest in agriculture.

*not his real name

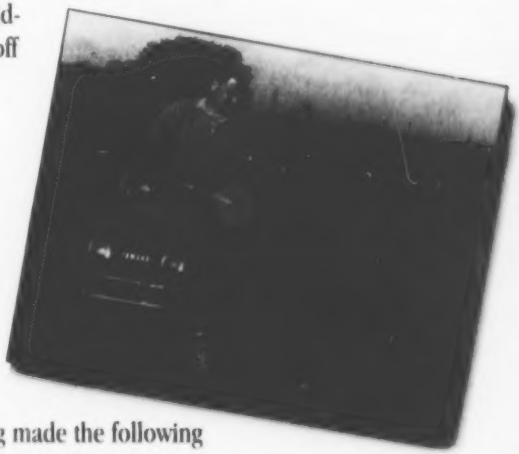
Source: Kenny Graham, Agricultural Education Instructor, Farmington FFA Chapter, Farmington, Missouri

Nebraska

Greg was born without hands. He was raised in a small community and operated tractors and farm machinery as a farm employee. He did not like prosthetic devices, preferring to wear mittens on his arms. His parents instilled in him the attitude that there was nothing he could not do. As an example, Greg competed at the state level in trapshooting with a specially designed shotgun.

In high school Greg took agricultural mechanics classes and did several welding projects in FFA. Later while studying at the University of Nebraska, Greg enrolled in a metal-working course, which requires good eye-hand coordination and considerable dexterity. He wanted to take the class because he had never been allowed to operate a gas welder before.

Modifications were made to the welding torch, including a double shut-off valve and foot control lever, so that Greg would not burn himself or catch his clothes on fire if he dropped the lighted torch. Greg himself assisted in planning the modifications. During the class, he mastered several welding tasks. He performed quality work which was often superior to that of his classmates.



In the task analysis afterwards, Greg made the following recommendations for teachers working with students with disabilities:

- Identify the student's needs as early as possible.
- Avoid making students feel that they are different; accept them as individuals and encourage them to learn by trying new activities.
- Let the students learn by trying – their failures will be as instructional as their successes. Modify the processes as necessary to find success.

"It takes a lot more to encourage a person with a disability to get involved and do things," Greg said. "I would encourage the teacher to help that person to want to learn and try new things. You just can't let the world pass you by."

Source: Thomas Silleto, Associate Professor, Department of Biological Systems Engineering, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska

New York

Chuck was large for his age, mechanically inclined, and hard working. He was enrolled in a class for students who were classified as developmentally disabled when he asked to transfer into my agricultural mechanics class. During a farm visit it became clear that he had excellent mechanical skills and considerable experience with farm equipment.

His first project was restoring a John Deere B Tractor that was used on the farm for chores. The outcome exceeded everyone's expectations. The more he did, the more he was encouraged, the greater his confidence grew. He remained in the class for four years and was involved in the FFA small engines competition and was one of the best FFA fruit salespersons in the class. His enthusiasm and determination to do the best job possible compensated for his difficulty reading and taking tests. His reading skills improved substantially as increasingly difficult mechanical problems forced him to refer to technical manuals for solutions.

Recently I heard that Chuck now has his own small business involving several pieces of earth moving equipment. Giving him the opportunity to participate and succeed in my agricultural education program was one of the highlights of my teaching career.

Source: Bill Field, Professor, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

"FFA would help my younger brother. He's only 12. He's really into gardening. It would give him more confidence in speaking and confidence in himself. It would also help some other kids in my school who are in a learning disabilities class to get into other classes; it would give them confidence."

Susan Pullen,
FFA member
Penns Grove High School
Penns Grove, New Jersey

Practical Ways of Improving Accessibility

Experience has shown that most FFA related activities can be adapted to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Patience, creativity, determination, and the ingenuity found in most rural communities can remove the majority of barriers to full participation. Contrary to commonly held perceptions, most adaptations can be made at little or no cost. The following are just a few practical ways that you can improve the accessibility of your program. See the Resource Section for more information on sources of help.

Program Accessibility

Program accessibility refers to the general policies, practices, and attitudes of an organization that either hinder or encourage participation by individuals with disabilities. For example, you can install a ramp or widen a door to improve physical access, but if members are allowed to belittle or poke fun at those in the group with a disability, program accessibility will be diminished. Programs can be made more accessible by:

- Ensuring that you and all other leaders, including volunteers, have made the appropriate commitment to guarantee full accessibility, to the greatest extent possible, for all students.
- Reviewing all printed policies and program information to ensure that there are no statements that would unnecessarily restrict a student with a disability from participating in FFA activities.
- Involving parents of students with disabilities as volunteers on advisory and planning committees.

> **"Anyone with a disability can do something in FFA. It will help them later in life. It gives them a sense that they have done something. I knew one girl in our chapter who had seizures. She liked animals. She was able to work with rabbits and take care of the[illegible]"**
>
> *David Cochauns, FFA member, Milton Hershey High School, Hershey, Pennsylvania*

- Letting the membership know that ridicule or abusive behavior toward others is not consistent with the mission of FFA and will not be tolerated.
- Making a membership commitment that no one will be left behind or left out due to a disability. You might be amazed by the creative solutions that students themselves come up with to ensure a classmate's involvement.

Classroom Accessibility

Nearly all newer schools have been constructed to be generally accessible to those with mobility impairments or those using wheelchairs. Many older schools are being remodeled to come into compliance with legislative requirements such as those found in the ADA. Questions concerning specific accessibility issues should be raised with the principal or superintendent, especially if there are barriers that hinder or prevent student participation. Typical adaptations include:

- Reserved parking spaces for students, teachers, and parents with disabilities.
- Signs directing people to accessible entrances and services.
- Automatic door openers on heavy outside doors.
- Lever-type door handles for those who can't turn a doorknob.
- Lowered door thresholds and ramps where needed.
- Lowered drinking fountains or placement of paper cup dispensers nearby.
- Accessible restroom facilities.
- Classroom arrangement and aisle widths that allow easy movement by someone using a wheelchair.

- Magazines and reference books in accessible locations.
- Work tables and desks raised or lowered as necessary.
- Lowered pencil sharpener.
- Accessible computer terminals and independent study areas.
- Installation, if needed, of a text telephone (TT).

In addition, some situations may require more simple adaptations that will involve a team approach. This might include converting classroom material to various accessible formats, such as large print, Braille, audio-tapes, or closed-captioning. It might involve a classroom aide, sign language interpreter, note taker or access to a lap-top computer for note taking.

Laboratory Accessibility (Shops, Greenhouses, Outdoor Learning Areas)

Considerable attention has been given in recent years to developing and adapting tools, equipment and facilities to enable individuals with disabilities to complete a wide range of activities. Many of these items would have direct application to specific problems faced by students with disabilities in the agricultural education laboratory. These include:

- Portable wheelchair ramps.
- Modified all-terrain vehicles.

"I encourage these students to get down to business and do something. It gives them the feeling of not being singled out because they have something wrong with them, but that they're being treated equally. They become more at ease with their disability. Then they have people looking at them, not because of their disability, but because of their achievement."

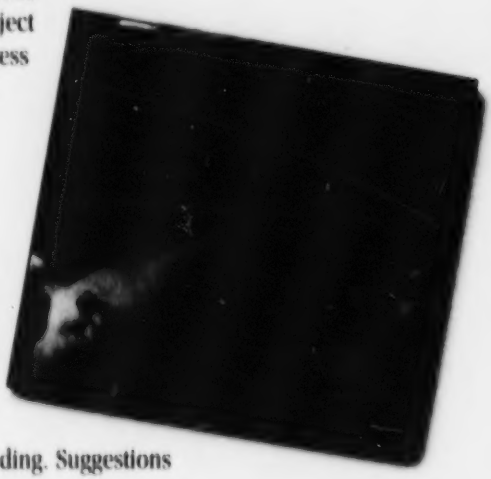
Marcia Paterson, Director of Agricultural and Environmental Education, Milton Hershey High School, Hershey, Pennsylvania

- Carpenter's level that provides an audible signal when an object is level.
- Tactually marked tools such as tape measure, combination square, framing square, and steel ruler for those with visual impairments.
- Pistol grip grease gun for people with only one hand.
- Retractable pole pruners.
- Telescoping watering wand to extend the user's reach.
- Raised or lowered planting beds.
- Automatic greenhouse windows that reduce the need to manually open windows.
- Tractors that have been modified with lifts and hand controls.
- Lightweight compressed air tools that reduce the effort required to remove nuts and bolts, to drill, polish, cut and even nail.
- Accessible trails and walkways in outdoor learning areas.

Considerable information on adaptive tools and equipment for the agricultural workplace has been assembled by the Breaking New Ground Resource Center at Purdue University. For additional information, see the Resource Section.

FFA Camp and Fair Building Accessibility

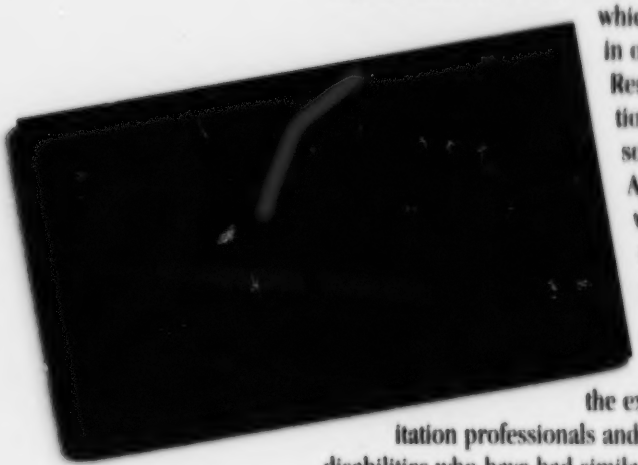
Improving the physical accessibility of the FFA camp and grounds and fair buildings could be a community development project which promotes disability awareness among FFA members. Develop a priority list for barrier removal, and make the most commonly used building at the FFA camp accessible first. Approach the fair board or administration to encourage assistance in making FFA facilities at the fair accessible. Local businesses are generally supportive of this type of activity and could, if requested, provide needed materials and funding. Suggestions might include:



- Provide accessible parking with signage.
- Widen aisles in livestock buildings and community centers.
- Lower thresholds where needed.
- Reserve seating at show arenas.
- Make the stage accessible with a ramp.
- Make hard-surfaced pathways to buildings.
- Provide accessible picnic tables for concession areas.
- Ensure that restroom facilities are accessible.
- Provide a public address system that will accommodate those with hearing impairments.
- Offer the services of an interpretive guide.

Student Farmstead Accessibility

You may be called upon to assist an FFA member in improving the accessibility of his or her home or farmstead. Two excellent resources are the Breaking New Ground Resource Center and USDA AgrAbility Project, which is now in operation in over 20 states. (See the Resource Section for additional information.) In some cases, the USDA AgrAbility Project staff will be able to provide on-site consultations to provide suggestions for improved accessibility.



Be sure to also use the expertise of local rehabilitation professionals and other individuals with disabilities who have had similar experiences. Think low technology and low cost before investing in high cost, complex solutions; with some creativity, most modifications can be fabricated locally at low cost. Don't necessarily assume you know what assistive modification is best for an individual. Instead, work with a team, involving the student, parents, IEP coordinator and other stakeholders to develop solutions.

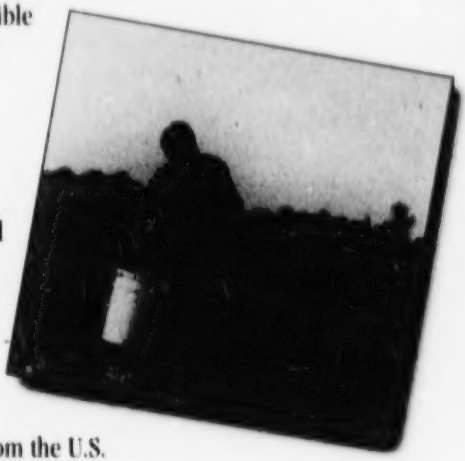
Other Ideas

It may be impossible to make all desired modifications because of "undue financial and administrative burden." Consider the following alternative methods for providing services and programs:

- Redesign equipment or materials used by students. For example, a student with a mobility impairment

could use a retractable pole pruner to assist with pruning in an apple orchard.

- Provide an aide or personal assistant to enable a student with a disability to participate in a program. For example, have another student read a pamphlet to a visually impaired student or to reach materials located on a high shelf for someone who uses a wheelchair. Providing a buddy system develops a caring attitude in the non-disabled student, and it helps the person with a disability feel like he or she is part of the group.
- Provide programs or activities at an individual's home or at an alternative accessible site.
- Be willing to provide programs and activities in an alternative accessible site when architectural barriers seem insurmountable.
- Perform a "self-evaluation" of your classrooms and facilities. You may wish to contact the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center in your area (800-949-4ADA) to acquire guidelines.
- Create a disability-related file. You may want to include a copy of the Accessibility Guidelines from the U.S. Department of Justice (telephone: 202-514-0301). See the Resource Section for sources of more information.



FFA members with disabilities have unique needs and may require more than the usual amount of support. Each person may have one or a combination of disabilities, related conditions and levels of functioning. As an FFA advisor, you will need to consider these various characteristics in choosing appropriate activities for these members. This section provides a brief overview of the most common types of disabilities and suggestions for how to assist members with disabilities in FFA activities. You may need to seek further, more detailed information from other sources. Consult the Resource Section of this guide for places to begin.

Physical Disabilities

Amputations or Missing Limbs

Levels and Characteristics

Amputations can involve any of the limbs and in some cases involve more than one. Functional limitations generally depend upon the location of the amputation and characteristics such as age and the use of prosthetic limbs. In a world that is generally designed for individuals with two hands and two feet, amputations can present numerous challenges.

Suggestions

- Almost every imaginable activity has been adapted for individuals with amputations or missing limbs. If a task is encountered that proves to be difficult, consult a local physical or occupational therapist for possible solutions.
- Physical activities should be encouraged and designed to exercise as many muscles as possible including those of affected limbs.
- Encourage the individual to devise his or her own adaptations and methods to accommodate for a

missing limb. Personally developed solutions are often more effective and not as readily rejected.

- Watch for falls as balance might be a problem when body weight is not equally distributed.
- Some individuals with amputations are extremely sensitive to cold weather. Often the stump requires extra protection from the cold.

Spinal Cord Injuries

Levels and Characteristics

Paraplegia – A condition in which the lower portion of the body is paralyzed. Both legs are paralyzed and there is little voluntary movement, and the individual has use of only the upper torso and arms. The lower the functional level of injury, the more voluntary motor control and muscle power is available to the individual.

An individual with paraplegia uses a wheelchair or possibly crutches with leg braces. Possible causes are polio, spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, or multiple sclerosis.

Quadriplegia – A condition in which there is greater paralysis and the individual may have limited or no use of the upper torso or hands.

Individual uses a wheelchair as the primary means of mobility (wheelchair is most likely battery-operated). Possible causes may be a mid- to upper-level spinal cord injury. It is important to note that many persons with a spinal cord injury do not sweat below the level of the injury and may overheat.

Hemiplegia – Paralysis occurs on one side of the body. This usually occurs from an injury to the brain on the side opposite to the weakness or paralysis. Examples include strokes, tumors, or birth injuries such as cerebral palsy or spina bifida.

Suggestions

- Remember that individuals in wheelchairs are generally able to participate in a wide range of activities. Don't assume that they are limited.
- Ask the person in the wheelchair if you can help. Note that people who use wheelchairs may be able to move independently. Grabbing someone's wheelchair and pushing the person without asking can be an invasion of the person's privacy and independence.
- Use the word "walk" in a normal context.
- When talking to a person in a wheelchair, get down to the person's level so neither of you ends up with a stiff neck. If giving directions, take into account barriers such as curbs, hills, or narrow doorways that may pose a problem.
- Enlist the member's opinion and help in making any adaptations to classroom instruction, teaching style, equipment modification, or facility adjustments.
- Make buildings accessible (without architectural barriers). They should have ramps, elevators, and wider doors, for example. Make temporary changes or adaptations such as widening aisles or rearranging furniture.
- Provide adaptive equipment, such as lowered work benches or equipment with foot-operated controls modified for hand use.
- Encourage physical activity and design it to exercise as many muscles as possible.

- Watch for signs of fatigue and tiring. Allow for rest periods. This is especially true in hot weather when overheating might be a problem for individuals with spinal cord injuries.
- Watch for hot or cold objects. If a metal chair is left in the sun and becomes hot, a person who uses a wheelchair may sit in it and get burned without knowing it.
- Provide a wide range of activities that are not physically related.
- Use lighter equipment, slow down moving objects, and reduce the size of the working area.
- Avoid slippery or waxed floors.

Visual Impairments

Levels and Characteristics

This includes individuals who are totally or partially blind. Often, youth with visual impairments have no other disabilities and their cognitive, intellectual and other abilities are developed.

Totally blind – Complete loss of vision, including light perception. The person is mobile with a guide dog, cane, or electronic aids; possibly reads Braille; and probably uses other senses to the fullest extent to compensate. The number of totally blind individuals is low compared to the number of those who are partially blind.

Partially blind – Has light perception and can see shapes and shadows but no details. Most individuals have some degree of vision. Possible conditions of partial blindness include:

- Cannot see straight ahead, but has peripheral vision. Individual is mobile without aid, reads regular print, has limited depth perception and requires few adaptations.

- Cannot see peripherally, but has vision straight ahead. Individual is mobile and may use a cane. He or she can read large print books and use magnifying aids, but close work is difficult.
- Blurred vision (cataracts). Individual is mobile without aid and needs large print.
- Lacks control of light entering eye. Individual is mobile but needs dark glasses to protect eyes from excess light.

Suggestions

- Always ask before helping. The person will tell you how you can assist.
- Identify yourself and introduce others who may be with you.
- Orient the person to the physical surroundings and allow him or her to explore them. Try to keep a room arrangement constant. If the room is rearranged, describe the changes to the person.
- Ensure easy access to all areas.
- Do not raise your voice when you talk. A person with a visual impairment can usually hear very well. Use normal vocabulary and talk directly to the person; do not talk through a third person. Also use the word "see" or "saw" in a normal context.
- If you want to offer assistance, allow the person to take your arm. Do not grab his or her arm and try to propel the person. As you guide the person, describe the terrain – let him or her know of approaching obstacles. Speak in a normal, clear tone of voice. Use explicit words such as up and down, left to right, and forward or backward.

- Do not leave doors ajar. This can be an obstacle for a visually-impaired person.
- Orient people with visual impairments to your car by guiding their hand to the seat, door, handle, or roof.
- Maximize as much as possible the involvement of the other senses – hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting – in activities.
- Demonstrate activities stressing the use of other senses.
- Walk on the opposite side of the guide cane. If the cane is on the right side, walk on the left side of the person.
- Provide printed material in alternative formats such as Braille or audio-taped books. In many communities, individuals with visual impairments have access to electronic print readers that either greatly increase the size of the text on a screen or actually read the text aloud. Providing such alternatives can enable the use of existing FFA project materials with few modifications.

"It's incredible to see the glitter in their eyes. The most important thing is how they're accepted. Make them feel a part of the program."

Paul Jaure, Agricultural Education Teacher, Beeville High School, Beeville, Texas

Hearing Impairments

The phrase hearing impairments refers to all degrees of hearing loss and includes the broad terms "hard of hearing" and "deafness." Hard of hearing implies the loss of sensitivity to sound, either in the ear itself or in the ear nerve. Deafness refers to a total or nearly total hearing loss.

Some individuals acquired their hearing impairment before they were able to understand and use language, while others acquired it later in life. Some people prefer to lip-read and speak, others use sign language,

others either write or type their messages, and some use a variety of these methods.

Levels and Characteristics
Hearing impairment ranges from slight or mild to severe or profound.

Slight – 25-40 dB: Difficulty hearing soft or distant speech, such as in a church or theater.

Mild – 40-55 dB: Difficulty in understanding conversational speech, such as in a restaurant or group setting.

Moderate – 55-70 dB: Difficulty hearing normal levels of speech (at 65 dB).

Severe – 70-90 dB: Cannot hear loud speech or understand speech on the telephone, but can hear shouted speech.

Profound (deaf) – greater than 90 dB: Difficulty hearing even shouted speech to no hearing ability at all.

Suggestions

- Get the person's attention before starting to speak.
- Face the person when talking to him or her.
- Keep your hand away from your mouth, so that the person can lip-read.
- Minimize other distractions. Try not to eat, chew gum, or smoke when talking with a hearing-impaired person. Reduce background noise.
- Speak clearly, especially if the hearing impaired person reads lips. Try to position your face so that the person can clearly see your lips move. It helps the person understand what you are saying if he or she can see your facial expressions and body language.

- Use written communications when verbal interaction fails.
- When talking to the hearing-impaired person through an interpreter (third party), maintain eye contact with the hearing-impaired person and talk directly to him or her, not to the interpreter.
- Be willing to repeat information if requested or if you think the person misunderstood what you said.
- Provide written instructions or instructional materials.
- Use other media such as an overhead projector and closed-captioned videos to communicate ideas.
- Use hand signals such as those devised by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers that can be used around high-sound-level equipment or from a distance.
- Install visual and audible alarms.
- Implement a buddy system of members working in pairs when working around machinery.

Speech Impairments

If you are speaking to a person with a speech impairment and you cannot understand what he or she is saying, ask the person to repeat it. Be patient and encouraging. Ask questions that the person can answer by nodding or with short answers. Don't pretend to understand if you do not. Instead, repeat what you do understand, and the person's reaction will let you know if you really have understood correctly.

Augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) refers to the use of communication techniques to supplement or augment one's physical ability to use oral or written communication. Some people may communicate by hand gestures or by manual sign language.

Some individuals do not have the hand skills to use sign language.

Disabling conditions for which augmentative/alternative communication may be useful include: cerebral palsy, closed head injury or trauma, stroke, severe burns to the face, and laryngectomy. Some conditions are short-term, while others are chronic.

Mental Disabilities

The phrase mental disabilities refers to characteristics of persons with below normal intellectual functioning and who are deficient in adaptive behavior. This group often does not have the skills needed to independently adapt to its environment. Traits are especially evident during the developmental period. Consequently, this group is sometimes referred to as developmentally disabled.

Levels and Characteristics

Mild/educable – Refers to individuals who generally are capable of learning academic skills to the sixth grade during the school years and become self-sufficient. They have an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) of about 50-70.

Moderate/trainable – Refers to individuals who have limited success in basic academic skills and who usually require controlled work and living conditions. Their IQ ranges from 30-55, and they may have difficulty with the pace and level of the regular classroom instruction.

Severe – Refers to individuals who can perform routine tasks and be partly self-supportive with appropriate supervision. They have an IQ of 40 or below and will have great difficulty with typical classroom instruction.

Profound – Refers to individuals who require complete care and supervision and have an IQ below 15. Their adaptive behavior is consistent with their IQ.

Suggestions

- Every student who is determined to be developmentally or mentally disabled is required by federal law to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is regularly updated by the local school. A contact with the member's special education teacher could provide an opportunity for certain FFA activities to become part of his or her educational plan.
- Individuals with mental disabilities learn more readily through the use of concrete, "hands-on" activities rather than abstract activities. Include modeling behavior with an emphasis on a three-step approach of "say, see, do," step-by-step verbal and visual cues, and peer teaching. Make sure to include short-term objectives in the member's IEP.
- Encourage participation in all activities.
- Be direct and concrete in giving directions and advice. To be sure the person has understood, ask him or her to repeat the directions.
- Cover essential points verbally and with other media, besides reading. Show pictures or illustrations, examples, and information familiar to the member's experience.
- Whenever possible, demonstrate how to perform a task.
- Speak simply, clearly, and specifically.
- Allow extra time and practice. The time needed to complete tasks varies by individual.
- Provide peer assistance when needed.

- Instill a positive, encouraging approach with respect to evaluating accomplishments.
- Remember that each person has a chronological age, a mental age, an emotional age, a social age, and a given level of physical activity. He or she may be functioning at different levels in each of these categories.
- A youth who has a mental disability strives more for individual success than for team success. Work with the individual to develop skills of cooperation and social interaction. (He or she also develops more slowly than his or her peers and may be functioning in some areas below the expected level.

Developmental Disabilities

Physical or mental disabilities that hinder social, intellectual, or cultural development are sometimes referred to as developmental disabilities.

A developmental disability does not necessarily imply below-normal intelligence. For instance, physical conditions such as diabetes, cerebral palsy, epilepsy or multiple sclerosis do not generally involve cognitive limitations, but can severely impact the individual's personal development. Characteristics may include:

- A shorter attention span. If an individual has difficulty staying quietly seated and academically focused, he or she may be hyperactive.
- Slow learning. He or she may need to repeat a certain task many times before performing it correctly.
- Poor motor coordination.
- Problems with memory. The person may become easily frustrated because he or she has difficulty learning new things.

- Difficulty with organization skills, making generalizations, applying previously learned information, or problems with social behavior. The person may need to be supervised because he or she often is not good at working independently.

Suggestions

- Tape record text or arrange for someone to read it.
- Use other forms of media.
- Present clear expectations.
- Present verbal and written expectations.
- Develop memory aids.
- Use hands-on training.
- Alternate difficult tasks with easier tasks.
- Break down assignments into smaller parts.
- Encourage students to work together to develop social skills.

Learning Disabilities

Individuals with learning disabilities have trouble receiving, processing or producing information. The learning disabled individual may have difficulty interpreting or responding to information that is seen or heard; performing actions that require motor ability, such as writing and speaking; interpreting or responding to touch; perceiving the passage of time; or interpreting or responding to the social behavior of others.

Levels and Characteristics

Cognitive – Basic skills (reading, math, writing) may be below average. Language skills (speaking, thinking, writing) may be underdeveloped.

Perceptual – May have difficulty with right and left and up and down, and may have difficulty understanding what is heard.

Motor – May be hyperactive or excessively inactive, may lack physical flexibility, and may be very spontaneous.

Suggestions

- Give directions one step at a time.
- Break down the planned activity into specific small steps, then teach the steps by building systematically from simple to complex. Allow the person extra time to complete tasks.
- Demonstrate a multisensory approach whenever possible. Provide verbal and written instructional materials.
- Find out if the person needs a peer to read materials.
- Determine whether the person needs assistance with interpreting or reacting to interpersonal situations.
- Stress areas of strengths, not weaknesses, when talking about an individual's problems.
- Do not emphasize competition.

Emotional Impairments

Levels and Characteristics

Emotional impairments are characteristics of individuals who generally exhibit socially unacceptable behavior and an inability to handle normal activities or situations acceptably. There are two general categories:

Aggressive behavior – Displays little or no obvious remorse; behavior often appears unchanged by discipline or consequences; person appears to be noncompliant. He or she may display anger or affection at inappropriate times. The individual also often brings with

him or her a history of criticism and punishment from others.

Withdrawn behavior – The individual may lack the ability or energy to pay attention; may be fearful, timid, shy, submissive, and have little social interaction or be fearful of situations that appear to be nonthreatening to others. The person may have anxieties or difficulty developing positive relationships with others.

Suggestions for Aggressive Behavior

- Be aware of any medication the individual is taking and its effects.
- Remember that emotional conflict is taxing and energy draining.
- Balance active and passive activities.
- Set clear, concise, and reasonable rules for behavior with the group before starting an activity. Discuss rules and consequences, then be consistent in enforcing rules.
- Reinforce all positive behavior immediately.
- Provide a structured environment with reduced stress.
- Ignore negative behavior initially. If it persists, give a warning. Provide clear cues or guidelines for appropriate behavior. Then, if negative behavior persists, enforce consequences.
- Attack the behavior, not the individual.
- Stress cooperation rather than competition.
- Provide opportunities to release tension and energy in acceptable ways through physical activities and relaxation techniques.
- Incorporate the individual's areas of strengths and interests into activities.

- Clearly end an activity before beginning a new one.
- Be honest and nonjudgmental. Allow sharing time for common interests, abilities, and feelings.

Suggestions for Withdrawn Behavior

- Be aware of any medication the individual is taking and its effects.
- Ask questions about the immediate environment to keep the individual's focus on the present.
- Secure the individual's attention before giving directions.
- Present clear and concise directions.
- Provide structure and routine.
- Be honest and discuss the youth's behavior with him or her.
- Provide immediate feedback and reinforcement.
- Balance passive and active activities.

There are various scholarship programs that may help young people with disabilities finance postsecondary education.

BRIDGE Scholarship

The National FFA Foundation offers scholarships for members with disabilities through the Building Rural Initiative for Disabled Through Group Effort (BRIDGE) program. Active FFA members who are high school seniors may apply for collegiate scholarships. Scholarship applicants should be seeking careers in agriculture. Criteria examined for the scholarship include academic work, work experience, leadership and the member's severity of disability. The scholarship application procedure follows the same process as applying for other FFA scholarships.

Interested applicants should contact their FFA advisor, school guidance counselor, or the scholarship office at the National FFA Center for an application. Applications are due February 15th of each year, and scholarships are awarded in May. Contact:

BRIDGE Scholarship
Scholarship Office
National FFA Center
5632 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway
Alexandria, VA 22309-0160
(703) 360-3600 (Voice)

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

With support from Nordstrom, the President's Committee is able to provide supplemental financial assistance to enable students with disabilities to pursue courses in higher education leading to business career

opportunities. Current high school seniors who have documented disabilities are eligible. For applications and information, contact:

President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
1331 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 376-6200 (Voice)
(202) 376-6205(TT)

University Student Financial Services

Many universities and colleges have financial aid programs designed to attract and assist students with documented disabilities. When applying, request information on scholarships and programs that target students with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services in your state may offer some financial assistance for higher education, based on the needs of the individual with a disability. The individual must apply for financial aid from the school he or she is applying to first, and aid may be given through VR if other means of aid have been exhausted. Eligibility is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Accessibility – There are two types of accessibility:

Building or facility accessibility – Structure that is readily usable by individuals with physical disabilities or other limitations.

Program accessibility – Program, activity, or service, viewed as a whole, which is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. Includes school activities open to parents or the public, such as athletic events or FFA meetings. Also includes the basic school program for students.

Assistive technology – Any service, item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Auxiliary aids or services – Items or services that ensure effective communication.

Disability – A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual.

Handicap – Any way in which an individual is affected mentally, emotionally, and socially by the disability or impairment.

Impairment – Consists of abnormalities of body structure or appearance, as well as abnormal functioning of various parts or organ systems of the body (example: paralysis, deafness).

Individual with a disability – One who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his or her major life activities.

Reasonable accommodation – An adaptation to a program, facility, or workplace that allows an individual with a disability to participate. Accommodations may include changes in policies, practices, or services and the use of assistive devices.

There are many organizations you can consult for assistance with maximizing the opportunities for young people with disabilities to be involved in and excel in FFA programs. This is only a partial list. As you avail yourself of these resource people, you will find that there is a wealth of experience and know-how available.

Since addresses and phone numbers frequently change, you may need to check the accuracy of information in the list below from time to time through other sources on disability organizations.

Resource People

- **Parents** – parents generally know the most about their child's abilities and limitations. They should be consulted first in the decision making process.
- **Health** – doctor in charge of student, occupational therapist/physical therapist, speech therapist or pathologist, pharmacist.
- **Government agencies** – local and state office of vocational rehabilitation, Governor's Committee on Employment of the Disabled.
- **School personnel** – principal, administrators, special education teacher, paraprofessional (teacher aide), school physician, school nurse, guidance counselor, school psychiatrist/school psychologist, resource room teacher, homeroom teacher.
- **Other FFA advisors or the National FFA Organization**
- **Local Independent Living Center staff**
- **Organizations specific to a particular disability (look in your Yellow Pages)**
- **Local assistive technology center** – The Technology Act of 1988 allocated funds to 38 states to create area technical assistance centers. Your state may have a regional assistive technology cen-

ter, or the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (listed below under "Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers") may have a regional center.

- **County Cooperative Extension Service staff**
- **Other** – caseworker or social worker, rehabilitation hospitals, learning centers, area vocational schools, libraries, university specialists, trade organizations, civic groups, businesses, private organizations, local churches/synagogues, religious organizations.

Support Services and Agencies

Abledata/NARIC
Adaptive Equipment Center
Newington Children's Center
181 East Cedar St.
Newington, CT 06111
(203) 667-5405 or (800) 227-0216 Voice/TT
Acts as an information clearinghouse for disability-related products. Provides telephone consultation with information specialists.

AgrAbility Projects
Breaking New Ground Resource Center
Purdue University
1146 Agricultural Engineering Building
West Lafayette, IN 47907
(317) 494-5088 Voice/TT; (800) 825-4264
The AgrAbility Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is a potential resource for agricultural education teachers. AgrAbility Project provides agriculturally based education to professionals working in agriculture, health, and vocational rehabilitation to assist agricultural workers with disabilities and their families. Services provided are free. AgrAbility Projects are now in operation in over 20 states.

American Amputee Foundation
Box 55218
Hillcrest Station
Little Rock, AR 72225
(501) 666-9540 Voice
Serves amputees and their families with information on home and work site modifications and prosthetic devices.

American Horticultural Therapy Association
362A Christopher Ave.
Gaithersburg, MD 20879
(301) 928-3010 Voice
(800) 634-1603 Voice; (800) 735-2258
(Maryland TT Relay Service)
Provides referral and information services to individuals with disabilities interested in horticultural therapy.

American Society for Deaf Children
814 Thayer Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 585-5400 Voice; (800) 942-2732 Voice/TT
Provides referral and information services to parents of deaf and hearing impaired children.

Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
(202) 272-5434 Voice/TT; (800) 872-2253 Voice/TT
Provides accessibility guidelines for the ADA.

Arthritis Foundation
National Office
1314 Spring St., NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
Serves persons with arthritis, including youth, with a wide range of activities.
(800) 283-7800 Voice

Breaking New Ground Resource Center
Purdue University
1146 Agricultural Engineering Building
West Lafayette, IN 47907-1146
(317) 494-5088 Voice/TT; (800) 825-4264
Offers resources to farm and ranch families where a disability hinders participation in farm-related activities. Training materials on farming with a disability are available for rural professionals.

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
6931 Arlington Road
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 951-4422 Voice; (800) 344-4823 Voice
Serves those with cystic fibrosis with resource information and support services.

Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers
(800) 949-4ADA
Provides answers on all aspects of the ADA.

Epilepsy Foundation of America
4351 Garden City Drive, Suite 406
Landover, MD 20785
(301) 459-3700 Voice
Provides information services to individuals with epilepsy and seizure disorders.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
1801 L Street, NW #5604
Washington, DC 20094-7604
(202) 622-3110, (202) 663-4568 Voice,
(202) 663-5403 TT, (202) 663-7022 Fax
Provides information on tax incentives for federal policies and regulations affecting equal employment opportunity.

Job Accommodation Network
West Virginia University
918 Chestnut Ridge Rd., Suite #1, P.O. Box 608
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
(800) 526-7234 Voice/TT; (800) ADA-WORK
Provides suggestions for practical solutions to accessibility problems.

National Association for Visually Handicapped
22 West 21st St., 6th Floor
New York, NY 10010
(212) 889-3141 Voice
Provides information to those who have visual handicaps, their families, and professionals. Has special programs for youth.

National Center for Accessibility
5400 State Rd. 67 North
Martinsville, IN 46151
(317) 349-9240 Voice/TT; (317) 349-1086 Fax;
(800) 424-1877
Provides information on accessible outdoor recreation.

National Easter Seal Society
230 W. Monroe, 18th Floor
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 726-6200 Voice; (312) 726-4258 TT;
(312) 726-1494 Fax
Promotes independence for individuals with disabilities. Offers a wide range of services to individuals with all forms of disability. Local services vary but all include public awareness activities. Is a partner in the USDA AgrAbility Project now in operation in over 20 states.

National Handicapped Sports & Recreation Association
1145 19th Street, N.W.
Suite 717
Washington, DC 20036
(301) 652-7505 Voice
Serves persons with disabilities who desire to participate in sports and recreation.

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 732-1139; (800) 949-ADA Voice/TT
Provides answers on all aspects of the ADA.

North American Riding for the Handicapped Association
P.O. Box 33150
Denver, CO 80233
(303) 452-1212 Voice; (800) 659-3656 (Colorado TT Relay Service)
Serves individuals or groups interested in handicapped horseback riding programs.

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities
1331 F Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20004-1107
(202) 376-6200 Voice; (202) 376-6205 TT
Promotes the employment of individuals with disabilities.

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Disclaimer

This resource is not comprehensive. It is only a tool to start the process of evaluating accessibility and improving access for persons with disabilities. Breaking New Ground; the National FFA Foundation, Inc.; and Purdue University are not responsible for the enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The information, materials, and/or technical assistance provided here are intended solely as informal guidance and are neither a determination of your legal rights or responsibilities under the Act, nor binding on any agency with enforcement responsibility under the ADA. This information must be supplemented by contacting the appropriate agencies, consultants, and state and local building codes. A list of appropriate agencies is provided in the resource section of this material.

National FFA Center
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Alexandria, VA 22309

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